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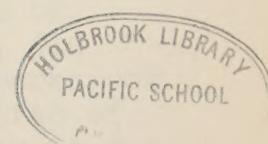
the WORLD ALLIANCE for INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP THROUGH THE CHURCHES

the WORLD ALLIANCE of YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS

the WORLD'S YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

the WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION

the WORLD'S SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION



The aim of the Ecumenical Press Service is to keep its readers informed of trends of thought and opinion in and about the Churches and Christian movements. It is therefore not to be held responsible for opinions expressed in its news items.

No. 21

Fourteenth Year

May 30, 1947

SWITZERLAND

Whitsunday and the Rebirth of the Church

An inter-church service was held in St. Peter's Cathedral in Geneva on Whitsunday, May 25, which was broadcast by the B.B.C. (see E.P.S. No. 17). Dr. W.A. Visser 't Hooft, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, delivered the sermon. "The story of Pentecost, he said, is the story of the birth of a community such as the world had never seen before, based on the unity of the Spirit. Formed by the Spirit, it is in fact not based on any human tie. A multitude of men with their divergent desires and convictions is transformed into a fellowship as the Spirit speaks to them, to each in his own language, about the Victory of God in Christ. The emergence of the Church is not the result of human intervention. It is the result of the intervention of God. The Church is nothing without the Spirit."

"Our Churches are not precisely ready for the revolution operated by the Spirit. And does not the same apply to our search for unity? We forget that the Spirit is not the product of unity but unity is the product of the Spirit."

"The warning of Pentecost is not to exclude ourselves from participation in the great events of God's history. We can go on refusing to hear what the Spirit says to the Churches and to the nations through the judgments which have come to us in the war, the atomic bomb, the cries of the starving and homeless. But then we reject the only truly creative possibility - the one force of fundamental renewal, the promise of Pentecost. But the promise of Pentecost is total renewal. The secret of the Church of Pentecost is that however dull and dead it may have been, it is again and again reminded of its origin and may at any moment be brought to life by the Spirit. In our own time we have seen such startling resurrections: Churches which seemed utterly unable to weather the storm of aggressive modern paganism, but which in the hour of crisis remembered that they owed their very existence to the Spirit and so were enabled not only to fight a good fight for the faith but also to bring renewal of life to their nations."

"We cannot have unity if we do not open ourselves to the Spirit. We receive unity if we let the Spirit operate upon us and among us. The search for Christian unity must essentially be a prayer-

for renewal of life. Thus the real issue in the movement towards Christian unity is whether sleeping, closed, static Churches can be transformed together into wide, awake, open, dynamic Church. That is why the central note of the Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948, where the Orthodox, Anglican, Old Catholic and Protestant Churches will meet to set up their permanent organ of fellowship, will concentrate on the theme "The rebirth of the Church". For reborn Churches are sure to meet each other in the centre where the Spirit speaks to them about the mystery of God's creative action in the world through His Church." E.P.S. Geneva

Orphaned Missions and Reconstruction Programme

Recently the Assistant Director of the Reconstruction Department of the World Council of Churches, Dr. Stewart Herman, met with representatives of the International Missionary Council and of various Continental missionary societies, including four German missionary secretaries, to discuss certain problems of mutual interest. This further contact between the Reconstruction work of the World Council and the Orphaned Missions responsibilities of the International Missionary Council has been of special value.

As much of Central Europe is cut off from immediate access to the mission fields, thus blocking both funds and personnel, an important element in the discussion was the desirability of coordinating the resources of the missionary societies in a world-wide programme of Christian Reconstruction. Specific proposals will be presented at the International Missionary Council conference which will meet in Toronto next month, but it was suggested in the meantime that in certain cases it would be mutually beneficial for the Continental missionary societies to enter into closer contact with the National Reconstruction Committees.

E.P.S. Geneva

Dr A. S. Trickett Comes to Geneva

Dr A. Stanley Trickett has accepted the appointment as Administrative Secretary of the Department of Reconstruction of the World Council of Churches and will come to Geneva in July to assist the Very Rev. Dr. J. Hutchison Cockburn, head of the Department. This is a new position created to cope with the expanding work of the Department. In part, Dr Trickett will replace Dr Stewart Herman, present Assistant Director, who resigned last month to return to the United States in September.

Dr Trickett comes well prepared to undertake the important task of supervising the whole work of religious rehabilitation, so far as it is centred in Geneva. He is a minister of the American Methodist Church and has lately been serving as assistant to Dr Diffendorfer on the Board of Missions and Church Expansion, through which is channeled all Methodist help for relief and reconstruction abroad. Dr Trickett became Chairman of the Church World Service Committee for Cooperation with the Churches in Europe, thus gaining an important insight into the problems with which he will have to deal in his new office. Dr Trickett who during the war was Assistant

Theater Chaplain in the Mediterranean Area has considerable knowledge of Europe and is already well-known in Geneva. E.P.S.Geneva

Statement on Refugees by the Ecumenical Refugee Commission

The Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches at its session in Buck Hill Falls, U.S.A., on April 22 to 25, 1947 unanimously endorsed the recommendations of the Ecumenical Refugee Commission submitted to it, the main points of which were given in the report on the Copenhagen meeting of the E.R.C. in the Ecumenical Press Service (see No. 15). These recommendations called for "redoubled efforts by Governments and the International Refugee Organisation towards

a. Voluntary repatriation of those, and only those, for whom this is safe and practicable.

b) Speedy resettlement elsewhere of as many as possible, with the assurance of economic opportunity, community welcome and eventual citizenship. We record our conviction that, in such transfers, family groupings should be preserved. We call upon Christian people in potential countries of reception both to make known to their Governments their own desire to help to rebuild these shattered lives, and also to rally public support for such a policy."

They concluded: "It appears inevitable, however, that a large proportion of these displaced persons and refugees will have to make permanent homes in the countries where they now are. This lays a tremendous obligation upon the governing authorities, people and Churches of such areas, to make optimum use of all available resources in the provision of work, decent housing, and educational and cultural possibilities. The worldwide Church must welcome this opportunity to strengthen the hands of the local parishes, and to make such activities a truly ecumenical witness."

The Joint Executive of the Refugee Commission, meeting later in Geneva, reviewed the situation and unanimously adopted the statement set out below on the new situation which had arisen in the developments since the Copenhagen meeting:

"The Joint Executive of the Ecumenical Refugee Commission in session in Geneva, on May 17th, 1947, has received and considered reports indicating an improvement, since the Commission met in Copenhagen in March, 1947, in the prospects of resettlement for Displaced Persons now in the care of UNRRA, and shortly to become the responsibility of IRO.

"The Executive records its profound gratitude for this change and for the fact that doors are at last opening for some of these homeless people. It is aware that the improving situation derives primarily from a new appreciation of the Displaced Persons as 'economic assets' in an age of man-power shortage. In noting this, the Executive expresses the earnest hope that this new economic appreciation of the refugee, valuable both in itself and in its results, shall not obscure his human value and endanger the integrity both of himself and his family.

"The Executive recognises that a movement towards resettlement based on economic considerations and resulting in the selection of the fittest throws into greater relief the plight of the thousands whose experiences have unfitted them for work and the millions who are unjustly excluded from this new opportunity on grounds of ethnic discrimination.

"It bears in mind also the needs of those children and aged and infirm people who will inevitably be left behind and whose future well-being is a social obligation and a Christian duty.

"Whilst therefore recording heartfelt thanks for the dawn of hope for some, the Executive feels constrained to call renewed attention to the resolution on the plight of Displaced Persons, Refugees and Expellees, which was unanimously endorsed by the meeting at Buck Hill Falls, U.S.A. on April 22-25, 1947. It therefore reminds all Christian people of their continuing responsibility and urges them to renewed prayer and effort, especially for those for whom as yet no prospects of resettlement exist." E.P.S. Geneva

UNESCO and Religion

Thirty non-governmental organisations working in the field of educational and cultural reconstruction that are international in character, at the invitation of UNESCO are in process of forming an emergency Council that will have direct relationship with UNESCO in its inter-governmental services in this field. Representatives of these voluntary organisations attended on May 21 and 22, 1947 a conference at Unesco-House in Paris where a tentative constitution was adopted and temporary officers elected.

It will be the purpose of this emergency Council "to provide a framework within which the efforts of UNESCO and of international non-governmental organisations active in the field of educational, scientific and cultural reconstruction, can be developed to the fullest possible extent by means of common planning, adequate allocation of responsibilities, and close coordination in the execution of programmes."

Mr. G.E. Haynes, an active member of the British Council of Churches, representing the International Conference of Social Work, was elected Chairman of this preliminary conference, and Mr. Donald E. Lowrie, the representative of the Y.M.C.A., was elected Vice-Chairman.

Mr. M.S. Eisenhower, Chairman of the United States National Commission for UNESCO, announced that religion will have a definite place on the agenda of all future UNESCO gatherings. Writing to Dr Stanley I. Stuber, National Director of Public Relations for the Northern Baptist Convention, and a delegate to the first national UNESCO conference, Eisenhower said he had given specific instructions that all area conferences in the United States include one panel discussion on what Churches in all communities can do to promote world peace and security.

E.P.S. Geneva

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UNITED STATESFederal Council Demands Help for Starvation Areas

At its meeting on May 20, 1947 the Executive Committee of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America adapted two resolutions concerning 1) the practical help to be given in view of the present crisis of hunger in Europe, and 2) a recent statement made by the Military Governor of Hesse in Germany.

The first resolution states: "In the present crisis of hunger in Europe, accentuated by a twenty-five percent failure in crops last year, a heavy moral responsibility rests upon a nation as favoured as our own. European civilisation is hanging in the balance. What we do to cope with the immediate emergency of lack of food may determine whether a continent will sink into chaos or will be rebuilt on firmer foundations.

"The Churches of our constituency, both directly and through Church World Service, Inc., are carrying on a substantial programme of relief and reconstruction. We urgently appeal for a more widespread and sacrificial giving to this programme. We would make the specific suggestion that every church family, until the next harvest, make a monthly contribution equal to one-tenth of its own food budget.

"The best efforts of the Churches and voluntary agencies, however, will constitute only a small fraction of the help that will be required to meet the crisis. We recognise the extraordinary and well-planned accomplishment of our Government in the procurement and shipment of grain and other needed items. The rising prices of food, however, and the consequent problems of exchange for the nations that could pay have added to the difficulties. There have also been regrettable delays and confusions in appropriations to provide food for the friendly nations which cannot pay, and for the areas under control of the Army in Germany, Japan and Korea. All this has served to prevent an adequate public understanding of the present tragedy. We therefore urge our Government to develop a far more comprehensive and generous programme of sale and of aid than has yet been initiated or even seriously proposed. We have faith that the American people will gladly support such a plan for fulfilling their responsibility when they fully realise the need."

With regard to the statement of the Military Governor of Hesse, the Executive Committee of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America resolved:

"We record our regret that an important regional official of the American Military Government in Germany should have been so callous as to threaten hungry and half-starved people with 'the harshest punishment, including death'. We are convinced that such a statement grossly misrepresents the spirit of the American people. We are grateful that General Clay, as Military Governor of the American Zone, instructed the regional official to soften the most extreme aspects of this statement by omitting the threat of martial law. When masses of people are in despair because of lack of food it is active sympathy not intimidation, for which the occasion calls." E.P.S. Geneva

GERMANYMeeting of the Evangelical Academies

The welcome development which has taken place in the work of the Evangelical Academy in Boll during the last eighteen months has led to the setting-up of similar Institutes in various parts of Western Germany. The most important part of the work is being carried on under the new Bishop of Hanover, Dr Hanns Lilje, in Hermannsburg near Celle, the former leader of the revival movement in Lower Saxony. The Evangelical Academy there is under the management of Johannes Doebring. The Academy has had a very strong influence through conferences for doctors, lawyers, farmers, students and press people, over the whole secular life of the province of Hanover. Most important of all, many leading thinkers in Northern Germany were brought together at these conferences and exchanged conversations with the Church. The conferences are arranged rather on the lines of the work at Bad Boll but with about 40 participants, which gives them a rather more intimate character.

In Hesse, under the leadership of the head of the men's work in Hesse, Lic. zur Nieden, an Evangelical Academy has been set up which forms a meeting-place for members of various vocations (chiefly academic) in Hesse. This scheme does not yet possess any conference sites of its own nor any full-time workers.

In Bavaria a similar scheme has been started at Tutzing on the Starnberger See. In this one of the outstanding people is Dr August Knorr from Koslin, Pomerania, who has already attended several conferences for doctors at Bad Boll. The work is still in its initial stages.

In Hamburg, under the leadership of the Hamburg pastor, Dr Junge, wekk-end conferences are arranged regularly for various vocational groups, and as soon as circumstances permit, this will be extended to form a real Evangelical Academy. The plans have been drawn up by Dr Hans Rudolf Müller and Dr Schauer of Karlsruhe. Professor Hammelsbeck of Wuppertal is working on the same lines.

The leaders of these different schemes met twice during the early months of this year, and formed a leaders' circle of the Evangelical Academy, which will meet every six months to exchange experiences and to give mutual help as far as possible. Dr Eberhard Müller and Lic. Johannes Doebring were appointed chairman and vice-chairman.

One piece of work has already been undertaken in common. This is the foundation of the study-community of the Evangelical Academy, which brings together leading men of various professions (especially leading scientists) in working communities, in order to submit the fundamental present-day problems of each particular profession to a thorough, scientific study. For special work the following Commissions are in course of formation: Problems of Foreign Policy - Medical Anthropology - Christianity and "Weltbild" - Christianity and Humanism - Pedagogical Questions - Fundamental and Practical Questions of Justice. The secretariat of the study community is in Bad Boll under the leadership of Dr Hermann Walz.

UNITED STATESWorld Youth Fund of the Y.M.C.A.

The month-long campaign of the World Youth Fund of the Y.M.C.A. in the United States was opened on May 2, 1947. The goal of the campaign is \$8,650,000. The funds raised will be used to help repair and rebuild as many as possible of the 105 Y.M.C.A. buildings in twenty-two countries that were damaged or destroyed.

General Romulo, who was aide de camp to General MacArthur, and is officially known as the "Last Man Off Bataan", said that the Philippines clearly recognised the importance of the Y.M.C.A. and raised 100,000 pesos in the first post-war fund campaign.

Richard W. Lawrence, chairman of the Advance and Special Gifts Committee, said the campaign was the most important activity ever undertaken by the Y.M.C.A. of the United States and Canada.

In a tableau called "Youth Speaks", boys from Greece, Poland, Czechoslovakia, China and the Philippines presented the pleas of their countries. An American boy responded. E.P.S. Geneva

MEXICOProgress of the Evangelical Churches

"Situated between 130 millions of English speaking people to the north and 130 million Spanish speaking people to the south", declared the Methodist Bishop Eleazar Guerra of Mexico City before the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America in special session, "Mexico must realise its strategic responsibility as the place of fusion of these two great cultural developments, that the foundations for the future may be well laid." The Bishop credited President Truman on his recent visit to Mexico with "having done more in one minute than all other statesmen in a century" to cement friendship between the two countries when he laid a wreath before the statue commemorating the bravery of Mexico's troops in the war with the United States in 1847.

Bishop Guerra paid tribute to the progress which the Protestant Churches in Latin America have made in the past 75 years. He said that "through education and broad cultural development the Evangelicals are today earning positions of leadership in many lines, and are highly respected for what they have contributed to present day civilisation." The present Protestant strength in Mexico is about one million members.

Bishop Guerra emphasised the need of great schools and great seminaries in Mexico to raise the level of leadership, and graduate study in the United States and elsewhere to bring the best thought of the whole world to the leaders of Mexican life. He pleaded also for a better paid ministry in rural areas, increase in production of suitable religious literature, erection of appropriate and attractive church buildings, and the development of a sense of unity among Protestant communions. E.P.S. Geneva

